

should have been—China—has also suffered as a result of the strategic incoherence of Administration statecraft. Both the President's passivity in foreign policy and his poor record of linking rhetoric with deeds have badly damaged our ability to manage China's emergence as a superpower—the central security problem of the next century.

Administration diplomacy for China has been fragmented as officials from the Commerce Department, USTR, Defense and various bureaus of the State Department pursued different, and often conflicting agendas in China. (Chicken export lobbyist lately gained brief control over our Russia policy, but that's the subject of another speech.) Moreover, the wounds the President inflicted on his own credibility as he mishandled the MFN question and the visit of President Lee—first assuring the Chinese that Lee wouldn't come, and then reversing his decision without informing Beijing—have seriously crippled the Administration's ability to have a constructive dialogue with the Chinese on the host of issues involved in our relationship.

Lastly, I want to make brief reference to another topical foreign policy mistake which reveals the leadership flaws of the incumbent administration: the recent disclosure that the administration acquiesced in, and possibly facilitated Iranian arms shipments to Bosnia. Currently the media and Congress are focusing on whether that action was illegal. Such focus may overlook the policy's more important security implications.

President Clinton campaigned for office by denouncing the arms embargo against Bosnia. As president, his expressed intent to keep his campaign promise encountered stiff resistance from Russia and our European allies. Rather than exert maximum leadership to persuade others to join in lifting the embargo or conceding that his earlier position had been mistaken, the President chose to allow Iran to arm the Bosnian Government. Consequently, the President helped create an Iranian presence in Bosnia that threatens the security of our troops stationed there, and which has destroyed the Administration's efforts to enlist our allies in efforts to isolate Iran internationally.

The legality of such a policy may be suspect. But what is beyond dispute is the stupidity of a policy that risks our larger security interests for the sake of avoiding a difficult diplomatic problem.

Thus ends my lecture on the criticality of "stylistic differences" in choosing a president. I fear I have abused your hospitality by making what could be construed as a partisan speech. But my purpose was not to take cheap shots at the Administration for the benefit of the Dole campaign. I think both Senator Dole and I have proven our regard for bipartisanship in the conduct of American foreign policy. That does not mean, however, that we should refrain from criticizing the President's foreign policy when we find it to be in error.

It would be a terrible disservice to the voters for either campaign to devalue the importance of foreign policy differences in this election—both conceptual and operational differences. The quality of the next President's leadership abroad will have at least as great an impact on the American people as will the resolution of the current debate on raising the minimum wage. And I end with a plea to all journalists to accord appropriate attention to all the issues in the voters' choice this November.

Now, I am happy to respond to your questions on this or any other subject which interests you.

## THE BAD (VERY) DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I think so often of that memorable evening in 1972 when the television networks reported that I had won the Senate race in North Carolina.

At first, I was stunned because I had never been confident that I would be the first Republican in history to be elected to the U.S. Senate by the people of North Carolina. When I got over that, I made a commitment to myself that I would never fail to see a young person, or a group of young people, who wanted to see me.

I have kept that commitment and it has proved enormously meaningful to me because I have been inspired by the estimated 60,000 young people with whom I have visited during the 23 years I have been in the Senate.

A large percentage of them are greatly concerned about the total Federal debt which recently exceeded \$5 trillion. Of course, Congress is responsible for creating this monstrous debt which coming generations will have to pay.

Mr. President, the young people and I almost always discuss the fact that under the U.S. Constitution, no President can spend a dime of Federal money that has not first been authorized and appropriated by both the House and Senate of the United States.

That is why I began making these daily reports to the Senate on February 25, 1992. I decided that it was important that a daily record be made of the precise size of the Federal debt which, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, April 24, stood at \$5,110,704,059,629.39. This amounts to \$19,307.33 for every man, woman, and child in America on a per capita basis.

The increase in the national debt since my report yesterday—which identified the total Federal debt as of close of business on Tuesday, April 23, 1996—shows an increase of more than 4 billion dollars—\$4,331,633,680.00, to be exact. That 1-day increase is enough to match the money needed by approximately 642,294 students to pay their college tuitions for 4 years.

## THE PLO CHARTER

Mr. PELL. Mr. President, yesterday the Palestine National Council voted by an overwhelming margin to revise its so-called Charter by removing clauses referring to the destruction of Israel. The vote is further evidence of sea change in Palestinian attitudes and ideology, and provided a welcome respite from the otherwise troubling situation in the Middle East.

In September 1993, during the signing of the historic Israel-PLO Declaration of Principles, PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat made a commitment to Israel to amend the Charter—the spirit and letter of which was clearly at odds with the peace agreement. Yesterday, Arafat, who is now Chairman of the autonomous Palestinian Authority, secured near-universal Palestinian backing for his pledge.

In voting to carry out this commitment, the Palestinians remain eligible under the terms of the Middle East Peace Facilitation Act, also known as MEPFA, to receive United States assistance. The vote also appears to open the way for the resumption of substantive peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians leading to a final status agreement.

As one of the original authors of MEPFA, I was particularly pleased by yesterday's events. In February, I led a congressional delegation to the Middle East, where the distinguished Senator from Virginia [Senator ROBB], the distinguished Senator from Oklahoma [Senator INHOFE], and I met with Chairman Arafat to urge that the Charter be amended. While I was somewhat skeptical after that meeting that Chairman Arafat would deliver on his promise, yesterday's vote helps to convince me that there is a forceful and sincere desire on his part to implement the peace agreements with Israel.

To be sure, Mr. President, there remains much concern about the future of Israeli-Palestinian relations. The issue of terrorism remains the most important factor in determining the success or failure of the peace process. We can, and should, continue to press the Palestinians to root out completely the terrorist element—which they will only be able to do with the support and good will of Israel. The vote yesterday, in my opinion, will do much to bolster Arafat's standing in Israel's eyes. And that bodes well for the future.

## MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Thomas, one of his secretaries.

### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

## MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:54 am., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Goetz, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1675. An act to amend the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 to improve the management of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2715. An act to amend chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, popularly known as the Paperwork Reduction Act, to minimize the burden of Federal paperwork demands upon small business, educational